



# Tomorrow's Leaders Today

The good news from HELM and higher education institutions of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)

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Produced by Higher Education and Leadership Ministries

February 2007

## Virginia congregation's gift adds Leadership Fellows slot

A congregation in the Blue Ridge Mountains of southwest Virginia will make a big difference in the lives of college students for years to come thanks to their decision to share their gifts with Higher Education and Leadership Ministries.

A few years ago Petunia Christian Church received a bequest at the passing of a member of the congregation. After consulting with the Christian Church Foundation, the congregation decided to



designate a portion of the income from her bequest to HELM with the intention of providing the funding for another slot in the HELM Leadership Fellows Program, which nurtures undergraduates who have shown leadership traits and who want to be leaders in the church.

"Since the inception of the Leadership Fellows Program in 2001, our biggest concern is that we have always had so many exceptional emerging leaders but not

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## Celebrate! finds joy and hope amid the debris of New Orleans

Hearing about the devastation left by Hurricane Katrina is one thing. Seeing it with your own eyes is another.

More than 700 students and campus ministers spent their New Year holidays at Celebrate, an event gathering students from seven denominations. They experienced the New Orleans that struggles daily to recover from the destruction and chaos left by the August 2005 storm. Students got their first look at the devastation during bus tours around the city.

"I still remember thinking just how surreal it all was," said Katie Griffin. "Even though the devastation was only a matter of feet from me, I still felt entirely too far removed from it. I was still behind the window of the bus, both in mind and body, unable to really reach out and touch the land, the people ... everything."

Celebrate's organizers worked hard to bring the flavor of the city – its history and its new reality – to the students in a variety of ways. The first night, jazz performer Irvin Mayfield, Jr., and his orchestra set the tone for the conference. They blasted out big-band music that brought dancers to their feet, and Mayfield's tales of the origins of several songs drew great rounds of laughter. But



Service work was the centerpiece of Celebrate. A crew of Disciples and UCC students helped gut a northeast New Orleans home that had been flooded with eight feet of water. Getting grungy were, in the front row, Katie Griffin and Derrada Rashad Rubell-Asbell. Middle row: Lauren Short, Sarah Lornbach, Meredith Jackson, Dani McRaney, and Suzanne Castle-Rolen of University Christian Church in Fort Worth. Back row, from left, Jeremy Arnold, Clay Sauncy, Douglas Graham, Andy Castle, and Tony McMahon.

they also told the stories of death and suffering that haunted them. Mayfield closed the concert with a eulogy for his father who drowned in Katrina's floodwaters.

"I really enjoyed the opening night experience. The first night really set the tone for the rest of the event and welcomed all participants to the city of New Orleans," said Trayce Stewart, a member of the STEP Leadership Team and the Disciples' representative on the Celebrate planning team. "It was a very warming and cultural way to experi-

ence the city firsthand."

On a Saturday that saw most service events cancelled due to stormy weather, several Disciples students were still able to serve at a home on the city's northeast side. Inundated by eight feet of floodwater, the home had to be gutted of its mold-infested drywall, carpet, and cabinetry.

"One of the most poignant times was after I entered the house," Griffin says. "I saw a Woody doll, a character from the movie *Toy Story*, stuck in the

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## HELM Leadership Fellows applications available

Do you know high school seniors or community college students ready to lead? Let them know about the HELM Leadership Fellows Program.

Applications for the program are available at [www.helmdisciples.org](http://www.helmdisciples.org) and must be postmarked no later than March 15. If you know of a student who should receive an application, send us the student's name and mailing address; we'll do the rest. E-mail [helm@helmdisciples.org](mailto:helm@helmdisciples.org) or call 314-991-3000 for more information.

## Indiana region begins leadership training for middle school youth

It's never too early to start lifting up leaders.

The Christian Church in Indiana has launched a new leadership project for middle school students. The project is designed to identify potential leaders of the church and then teach them about Disciples and about leadership and mission.

During the summer, Chi Rho camp counselors were asked to look for campers who showed compassion and leadership skills. Sixteen Chi Rho campers were invited to participate in the pilot, and eleven joined the program.



The first meeting was October 21 at Tabernacle Christian Church in Franklin. Seven Chi Rho'ers attended. (Four others will be involved but could not be present that day.) The kids spent time getting to know each other and began learning about leadership. One of their first acts was to rename the group. They are the LEAD group – because they were chosen as LEADers of the church. LEAD is also an acronym for "Learn Everything About Disciples."

LEAD is a six-year project organized in two-year cycles. The first two years will be spent learning about Disciples and Disciples history. The group is planning to attend General Assembly next summer. They will also be traveling to Cane Ridge, Lexington, and Bethany in their second year.

Congregational formation, diversity, religion in North America and international missions, culminating in an overseas mission trip, are also included in the program.

For more information on Indiana's LEAD program, contact Becki Nunnaly at 317-926-6051 or e-mail [becki@ccindiana.org](mailto:becki@ccindiana.org).

## Campus Chaos II: Return of the Brackets

Campus Chaos, the competitive way to share campus ministry ideas and build networks, is back this spring.

Any Disciples or UCC-related campus ministry is invited to submit a 200-word essay on how they get students involved in campus ministries or social justice issues.

All submissions will be bracketed, and projects will advance through the brackets by a vote of the people. The field will narrow weekly, culminating in a championship showdown. A champion will be announced in April.

But it's not about the championship. All entries will be compiled into a PDF – a great resource for campus ministries, young adult and youth groups looking for ways to attract crowds and find new ways to get students involved.

"Coming up with fresh ideas for new ways to learn, serve and have fun is the bane of campus ministries," said Mona Bagasao, chaplain at Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Fla. Her campus ministry group had three entries in 2006. "Whether or not you win Campus Chaos, it's a great place to plunder for new concepts, a little brain tickling and a lot of joy as we see what other campuses do."

During the spring of 2006, 30 entries from ten campus ministries faced off. In a four-way final showdown, Syracuse University Protestant Campus Ministry carried 36% of the vote to claim the championship. Other finalists included student groups at Lynchburg College, Missouri State University, and Chapman University. All entries are included in a PDF available online at [http://www.stepnetwork.org/chaos06/CC06\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.stepnetwork.org/chaos06/CC06_booklet.pdf).

Schools and congregations represented in the inaugural Campus Chaos were the University of Georgia, Keene State College, the University

of Houston, Transylvania University, Eckerd College, and First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Columbia, Missouri.

Campus Chaos II is sponsored by the Student Ecumenical Partnership (STEP), the national student ministry for the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ).

"The feedback we received about Campus Chaos was impressive," said Brad Lyons, the Disciples' staff liaison to the STEP Team. "The students enjoyed getting a chance to share their ideas, and the campus ministers appreciated the new ideas. Our hope is that this year will bring a batch of new ideas and new ways of doing ministry to college students, a key group in the future of the church."

Getting involved in Campus Chaos II is easy. E-mail a 200-word description of the program describing projects that got students involved in ministry to [blyons@helmdisciples.org](mailto:blyons@helmdisciples.org). Photos are welcome. All entries must be received by March 9, 2007. All entries will be placed in brackets. Voters will select a winner from each pairing to survive and advance to the next round.

Anybody with an interest in campus ministries can vote. Go online to [www.stepnetwork.org](http://www.stepnetwork.org) and click on the Campus Chaos pennants. Alumni can support their alma maters, and regions can rally behind their representatives. Results will be posted each Wednesday as the votes are finalized.

"One of the great things about colleges and universities and campus ministries is that at a moment when you least expect it, you find somebody else who went to the same school or campus ministry," Lyons said. "Campus Chaos appeals to school spirit, and it's a reminder of the times when many people form their core values, a reminder of the importance of campus and student ministries."



## CELEBRATE

railing of the stairs. He was discolored and consumed with mildew, and looked up at me with his big plastic eyes, as if he were trying to say, 'What took you so long?'"

Helping at one house may not seem like much, but it gave students a sense of how overwhelming the disaster is.

"Some people talk about the 'rebuilding' of New Orleans, but there is really no rebuilding being done in the Ninth Ward. It has all been left just sitting there for over a year," said Meredith Jackson, a student at Cal State University, Davis. "Some of the houses have

been stripped of their contents, some have had the walls gutted, but there is no sign of life. For blocks at a time you don't even see a trailer. The people are still waiting for a sign that their country cares about them."

It could have been easy to come away from Celebrate discouraged and angry, but another group of New Orleans performers, the multiracial choir Shades of Praise, closed the conference with songs of hope and promise.

"Our trip, the few days that we were there, helped more than I could have imagined," said Danica Lute, a

student at Ripon College. "All it takes to be impacted by these upbeat God-loving people is one song, one speech, one person, one voice, one action."

Other experiences like a Second Line parade into the French Quarter and New Year's Eve in a city famous for its parties spoke to students.

"These experiences showed us that the people of New Orleans are going to live through the struggle, and still occasionally find time to celebrate the fact that they're alive," Jackson said.

For more about Celebrate, visit [www.cescm.org/Celebrate06/](http://www.cescm.org/Celebrate06/).



The Young Adult Commission, sponsored by Disciples Home Missions and supported by HELM, met in January to plan General Assembly events and look at other ways young adults can be involved in ministry. Co-moderator Alison Williams takes notes as John Davidson and new commission member Andrew Holmer discuss ways to collect ideas for effective young adult ministry from congregations.

## STEP Leadteam adds students at Chapman, Eureka

Maybe STEP's new focus on social justice played a part in having two political science majors added to the STEP Leadership Team.

Sarah Little and Katie Blaisdell, both sophomores, began their two-year terms on January 1. Blaisdell is a student at Chapman University. She holds joint memberships in Hilo Church United Church of Christ, Hilo, Ha., and First Christian Church, Concord, Calif. She serves as the editor of Chapman's DOC newsletter.

Eureka College's Little is a member of First Christian Church of Blytheville, Ark. She is one of only 20 participants in EC's Ronald Reagan Leadership Program and served on the school's search committee for a new chaplain. (See page 4).

Disciples partner with the United Church of Christ, which had three Leadteam vacancies to fill. New UCC representatives are Meredith Jackson (University of California, Davis), Danica Lute (Ripon College) and Tony McMahon (Heidelberg College).

Most of the new members were able to attend Celebrate during the New Year's holiday. The entire team will gather March 30-April 1 in St. Louis to plan General Assembly and General Synod events.



BLAISDELL



LITTLE

Continuing their service on the STEP Leadership Team for Disciples are TCU junior Kelly Rand and Hiram College junior Trayce Stewart. Sarah Lohrbach, a junior at Elmhurst College from Bourbonnais, Ill., returns as a UCC representative.

The addition of two Disciples also represents the conclusion of STEP Leadteam terms for two other students. Katie Griffin (University of Southern Indiana) is a senior elementary education major from Bethany Christian Church in Evansville, Ind., and Beau Underwood (Eureka College), a Princeton, Ill., native now pursuing graduate studies at the Disciples Divinity House of the University of Chicago.

"It is impossible to say 'thank you' enough for what Beau and Katie have done for STEP," said HELM's Brad Lyons, a staff liaison for STEP. "They helped STEP clarify its vision for social justice, then helped carry out that vision. We have cherished their hard work, their passion, their creativity, and most of all the joy they've carried the entire time."

STEP's ministries receive significant support from the James I. Spainhower Campus Ministry Endowment and the Raymond F. McCallister Campus Ministry Endowment.

# Former moderator, campus minister join HELM board

The HELM Board of Directors welcomes two new members to four-year terms.

Dr. Charisse L. Gillett is the program director of the Lilly Project at Transylvania University, a program for the theological exploration of vocation. She holds both undergraduate and master's degrees from the University of Northern Iowa. She holds an educational specialist degree and a doctorate from Northern Illinois University. Prior to coming to Transylvania, she served as the director of student financial aid at Midway College and at other higher educational institutions. From 2003-2005, she served as the moderator of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and on the Executive and Administrative Committees of the General Board. She also served on the boards of the National Convocation, the African-American Clergy Leadership Development Committee of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Lexington Theological Seminary, and the National Benevolent Association. She is married to the Rev. Donald Gillett II, senior pastor of East Second Street Christian Church in



GILLETT

Lexington.

Rev. Amy Kay Pavlovich serves as chair of HELM's nine-member Council on Ministries in Higher Education (CMHE). A native Kansan, she currently serves as associate minister at First Christian Church in Columbia, Mo. She received her Bachelor's degrees in Psychology and Communications from "the other" Bethany College, the one in Kansas, and her Master's degree in Rhetoric and Communication from Kansas State University. She came to her current congregation in July 2001. Hillcrest Hall on the campus of Stephens College is where Amy Kay lives along with her husband Dane and son Sebastian.



PAVLOVICH

Reelected to second terms on HELM's board are former publisher Tom Wood of Chesterfield, Mo., and Dr. Bill Edwards, regional minister of the Christian Church in Ohio.

Leaving HELM's board are two-term member Martha Brown of Fort Washington, Md., and former CMHE council chair David Jones of Manhattan, Kan.

The HELM board will meet April 27-29 in St. Louis, Mo.

## PETUNIA

enough funding to support them all," says HELM President Dennis Landon. "In 2006, we were able to add another Leadership Fellow as a direct result of the Petunia gift. We are very grateful for this congregation's generosity and foresight. This gift's potential impact is incalculable."

Beginning in 2007, a Leadership Fellow will be designated each year to commemorate the gift.

The congregation also designated funds for the Christian Church in Virginia, congregational outreach and scholarship programming, and the region's camping program.

For more information on Petunia's gift or how a congregation can make a similar gift, contact HELM at 314-991-3000 or the Christian Church Foundation at 800-668-8016.



## Seminarians heading to Nashville this April

Spread the word – the Disciples Seminarians Conference is almost here!

The Disciples Seminarians Conference gathers all M.Div. students who have completed at least one year of study for a time of fellowship, networking, worship, and learning about the wider ministries of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). This is their chance to meet other new leaders of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) and learn how the church can help pastors to minister faithfully and effectively.

If you know a seminarian, make sure she or he knows about this conference. Direct seminarians to [www.helmdisciples.org](http://www.helmdisciples.org) for information on the conference and travel subsidies. The conference will be April 12-15, 2007, in Nashville, Tenn.

Look for a report on the Seminarians Conference in the next edition of *Tomorrow's Leaders Today*.

## On campus

### Familiar face named chaplain at Eureka College

Rev. Bruce Fowlkes, the former director of young adult ministries for the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), is the new chaplain at Eureka College in Central Illinois. Fowlkes began duties Jan. 3.



FOWLKES

"Rev. Fowlkes brings six years of campus ministry experience and a constellation of other related church experience to his position of chaplain at E.C.," said Eureka College President J. David Arnold in a written statement.

Fowlkes has been director of corporate development for the Leadership Education for Adult Professionals program at Indiana Wesleyan University School of Business since 2005. He formerly was director of the

office of Young Adult Ministries at Disciples Home Missions in Indianapolis for four years.

The Arkansas native received a bachelor's degree in philosophy and religion from Drury University in Springfield, Mo., and a master of divinity degree from Brite Divinity School in Fort Worth, Texas.

He then served as the minister to Disciples students and young adults at University Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) at Texas Christian University, Fort Worth, for four years. He also was a minister and associate minister at churches in Arkansas, Kentucky and Texas.

"I am honored to be called as the chaplain of Eureka College," said Fowlkes. "The college is an extraordinary place, rich in history, but more importantly a college moving strongly and faithfully into a glowing future."